



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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First RFID Technology Upgrades Complete

Technology enhancements and next generation travel documents mean more secure, efficient borders

Detroit – U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced that technology upgrades are complete at the Detroit border crossings with Canada, and that the ports of entry in Port Huron and Sault Sainte Marie will be completed in the spring of 2009. These locations mark the start for new Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology deployments at 354 vehicle primary lanes in northern and southern border ports that account for 95 percent of all cross-border travel into the U.S.

“We are very pleased to announce our first vicinity RFID-enabled land ports of entry, and we thank the border communities for their patience during construction,” said Thomas Winkowski, Assistant Commissioner Field Operations. “The option of using an RFID-enabled travel document offers more efficient processing for travelers while meeting CBP’s goal of securing the borders.”

The upgrades, which include new software, hardware, and the deployment of vicinity RFID technology, are being implemented as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). WHTI, a plan to implement the statutory mandates of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 and a 9/11 Commission recommendation, requires U.S. and Canadian citizens to present secure documentation that confirms identity and citizenship when entering or re-entering the United States from within the Western Hemisphere. WHTI will be implemented at land and seaports on June 1, 2009.

The technology works in tandem with new vicinity RFID-enabled documents, designed for use at our nation’s land and sea ports of entry. These documents include State Department-issued passport cards, CBP’s trusted traveler program (NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST) cards, and enhanced driver’s licenses that will be available in Michigan in early spring of 2009. When read by CBP, an RFID chip embedded in these documents transmits a unique number to a secure database as the traveler’s vehicle approaches the border, enabling CBP officers to verify the traveler’s identity and citizenship more quickly than ever. No personally identifiable information is stored on the chip or transmitted when the RFID chip is read. Facilitative technologies, such as RFID, provide CBP officers the ability to remain more attentive and vigilant during the inspection process, focusing more time and attention on travelers, with less time spent performing manual data entry queries.

CBP encourages individuals to apply for the new high-tech documents now to ensure that they have appropriate travel documents when WHTI goes into effect on June 1, 2009. Travelers can go to www.getyouhome.gov for more information.

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of U.S. borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the United States while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.